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**MAILED**  
**OCT 04 2011**  
**OFFICE OF PETITIONS**

Patent No. 5,697,260 :  
Rixon et al. :  
Issue Date: December 16, 1997:  
Application No. 08/741,981 : DECISION ON PETITION  
Filed: October 31, 1996 :  
Attorney Docket No. D11-051 :

This is a decision on the PETITION TO ACCEPT UNINTENTIONALLY DELAYED PAYMENT OF MAINTENANCE FEE IN AN EXPIRED PATENT (37 CFR 1.378(c)) filed September 22, 2011 to accept the unintentionally delayed payment of a maintenance fee for the above-identified patent.

The petition is **GRANTED**.

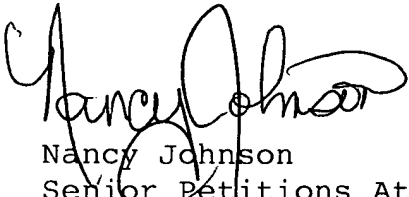
The patent issued December 16, 1997. Office records indicate that the first and second maintenance fees were timely received. The grace period for paying the third maintenance fee provided in 37 CFR 1.362(e) expired at midnight on December 16, 2009, with no payment received.

The petition was timely filed within twenty-four months after the expiration of the six-month grace period. Further, as required, petitioner submitted with the petition the required maintenance fee, the surcharge for accepting an unintentionally delayed maintenance fee after expiration, and a statement that the delay in payment of the maintenance fee was unintentional.

Accordingly, the maintenance fee in this case is hereby accepted and the above-identified patent is hereby reinstated as of the mail date of this decision.

This petition was filed by a registered patent practitioner. The address set forth on the petition differs from the correspondence address of record. A courtesy copy of this decision is being sent to the address on the petition. All future correspondence will be sent to the correspondence address presently of record, until such time, if at all, as a change of correspondence address (patent) is made of record.

Telephone inquiries related to this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3219.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Johnson", is written over the typed name and title.

Nancy Johnson  
Senior Petitions Attorney  
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cc: Gifford, Krass, Sprinkle, Anderson & Citkowski, P.C.  
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